

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ATHENS 00942 302012Z

47

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EURE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

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FM AMEMBASSY ATHENS

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USMISSION EC BRUSSELS PRIORITY

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

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AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURT

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AMEMBASSY ROME

AMCONSUL THESSALONIKI

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EO 11652: NA

TAGS: PFOR EEC GR

SUBJECT: GREEK-EC RELATIONS - GREEK REACTION TO EC COMMISSION REPORT

ON GREEK ACCESSION

REF: A. ATHENS 916; B. EC BRUSSELS 98; C. EC BRUSSELS 138

SUMMARY AND COMMENT: GOVERNMENT, OPPOSITION AND MEDIA

REACTION TO CONTENTS OF EC COMMISSION OPINION ON EARLY

GREEK ACCESSION RANGE WITH FEW EXCEPTIONS FROM DISAPPOINTMENT

TO DISMAY. IT APPEARS THAT GOVT WAS TRULY SURPRISED

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PAGE 02 ATHENS 00942 302012Z

BY QUALIFIED COMMISSION ENDORSEMENT OF GREEK ENTRY

APPLICATION. AT THIS POINT POSITIVE ASPECTS OF COMMISSION POSITION ARE RECEIVING LITTLE IF ANY ATTENTION. OFFICIAL GOG RESPONSE, IN STATEMENT ISSUED LATE JANUARY 29, IS CHILLY BUT CALM, REFLECTING SHARP DISAPPOINTMENT BUT HOLDING OUT HOPE THAT EC COUNCIL OF MINISTERS WILL COME TO THE RESCUE. NEXT STEP FOR GREEKS IS UNCERTAIN, BUT CENTRAL ELEMENT WILL UNDOUBTEDLY BE REDOUBLING OF LOBBYING EFFORT IN EC NINE CAPITALS. WE HAVE JUST LEARNED THAT PM HAS SUMMONED AMBASSADORS OF EC NINE TO MEETING AT 1030 AM, JAN 31. END SUMMARY.

1. REF A CONTAINS TEXTS OF OFFICIAL GOG STATEMENT, AND REACTIONS OF OPPOSITION CENTER UNION/NEW FORCES PARTY AND OF ANDREAS PAPANDREOU OF PANHELLENIC SOCIALIST MOVEMENT (PASOK) TO EC COMMISSION ANNOUNCEMENT CONCERNING ITS OPINION ON GREECE'S APPLICATION FOR EARLY EC ACCESSION. BRIEF OFFICIAL GOG COMMENT IN EFFECT ANSWERS THE COMMISSIONS "YES, BUT..." WITH A "WE'LL SEE." GIST OF OFFICIAL RESPONSE IS OBSERVATION THAT COMMISSIONS STATEMENT IS CONTRARY TO THE DESIRES OF EC MEMBER STATES, AND IMPLIES AN EXPECTATION THAT THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS MAY TAKE MORE FAVORABLE VIEW OF GREEK APPLICATION (I.E. THAT THE COUNCIL WILL GIVE THE GREEN LIGHT FOR NEGOTIATIONS WITH A SET AND EARLY DATE FOR GREEK ACCESSION).

2. GOG HAS APPARENTLY BEEN CAUGHT OFF GUARD BY THE COMMISSIONS QUALIFIED RECOMMENDATION. ANNOUNCEMENT HAS PRECIPITATED SERIES OF MEETINGS AT MINISTERIAL AND SUB-MINISTERIAL LEVEL TO CONSIDER NEXT MOVE. FONMIN CONTACT STATED THAT MINISTRY IS IN "UPROAR" OVER RESPONSE. ONE SIGN, HOWEVER, THAT PERHAPS GOG HAD EARLIER CAUGHT WIND OF THE TENOR OF COMMISSIONS REPORT IS FACT THAT PM CARAMANLIS SENT OUT LETTERS TO HEADS OF GOVT OF NINE EARLY THIS WEEK SOLICITING SUPPORT FOR THE GREEK APPLICATION. NEXT STEP IN GREEK STRATEGY IS AS YET UNCLEAR, BUT LAST NIGHT'S ANNOUNCEMENT WOULD SEEM TO INDICATE THAT IT WILL CENTER ON HARD LOBBYING IN CAPITALS OF THE NINE.

3. REACTION OF OPPOSITION PARTIES WAS PREDICTABLY LESS RESTRAINED THAN THAT OF OFFICIAL RESPONSE. CENTER UNION/ NEW FORCES, WHICH HAS BEEN STRONG SUPPORTER OF EC MEMBER- LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 ATHENS 00942 302012Z

SHIP, CALLED FOR CLARIFICATION OF "STRONG DOUBTS AND QUESTIONS" RAISED BY COMMISSION REPORT; CRITICIZED REFERENCE TO GREEK-TURKISH DISPUTE; INVOKED IRISH PRECEDENT FOR MEMBERSHIP OF STATE WITH RELATIVELY LESS DEVELOPED ECONOMY; AND CALLED ON EC MEMBERS TO TAKE NECESSARY DECISION TO OPEN NEGOTIATIONS AND SET TIME FOR GREECE'S FULL INTEGRATION. PASOK LEADER PAPANDREOU, WHO HAS ALL ALONG OPPOSED GREEK MEMBERSHIP IN EC, DESCRIBED THE COMMISSIONS REPORT

AS AN ATTEMPT BY THE US AND ITS ALLIES TO WRING CONCESSIONS FROM GREECE INCYPRUS, IN THE AEGEAN, AND IN THE BASE NEGOTIATIONS.

4. THE PRESS IN GENERAL REFLECTED THE SHARP LOCAL DIS-APPOINTMENT WITH THE COMMISSIONS REPORT. AS USUAL, BAD NEWS PROVIDED INSPIRATION FOR SOME FLIGHTS OF FANTASY. OPPOSITION, LIBERAL TO VIMA HEADLINED, "NATO AND TURKEY CLOSE COMMON MARKET DOOR" AND EDITORIALLY COMMENTED "THE GREEKS CLEARLY SEE THE FINGER OF AMERICAN POLICY" BEHIND THIS UNEXPECTED DEVELOPMENT. PRO-GOVERNMENT KATHIMIERINI OBSERVED THAT POLITICAL MOTIVES WERE BEHIND THE NEGATIVE ELEMENTS OF THE REPORT, AND SPECIFICALLY RELATED THEM TO GREECE'S RELATIONS WITH NATO AND TURKEY, QUOTING REPORTED REMARKS AT PRESS CONFERENCE BY EC COMMISSION VICE PRESIDENT SOAMES TO SUPPORT THIS CLAIM. OPPOSITION, LIBERAL TA NEA AND PRO-PASOK ATHINAIKI SAW THE DECISION AS SIMPLE US BLACKMAIL. APOGEVMATINI AND VRADYNI (BOTH PRO-GOVT) TENDED TO PUT THE BLAME ON EC TECHNOCRATS, WITH VRADYNI EXPRESSING OPTIMISM FOR A REVERSAL OF THE COMMISSION POSITION BY THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS. LEFT OF CENTER, ANTI-US ELEFTHEROTYPIA REFERRED TO THE COMMISSIONS ACTION AS AN EC BETRAYAL OF CARAMANLIS. AVQI (COMMUNIST PARTY INTERIOR) ATTACHED REACTIONARY ELEMENTS IN EC FOR USING ACCESSIN ISSUE TO PRESSURE GREECE ON CYPRUS AND NATO.

5. LOCAL PRESS ALSO PICKED UP NEWS AGENCY REPORTS FROM BRUSSELS INDICATING THAT THE BRITISH, GERMAN, IRISH, DANISH AND BELGIAN COMMISSIONERS HAD SUPPORTED THE COMMISSION PAPER, WHILE THE FRENCH AND ITALIANS HAD OPPOSED IT, WITH DUTCH AND LUX COMMISSIONERS ABSTAINING. PRESS HERE ALSO PICKED UP WIRE SERVICE REPORTS OF COMMISSIONER
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PAGE 04 ATHENS 00942 302012Z

SPINELLIS REMARKS CHARACTERIZING THE POSITION AS A "BAD DECISION FOR EUROPE" AND ONE WHICH RUNS THE RISK OF PUSHING THE COMMUNITY NEARER TO A TWO TIER SYSTEM OF MEMBERSHIP.

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